

6. On a new Species of Indian *Prinia*.

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(Plate XIX.)

It had been my intention to write a connected account of the birds of Northern Kumaon, the result of a two months' ornithological excursion into the Alpine regions of this part of the North-western Himalayas during the summer of 1875¹. Time, however, has failed me, to say nothing of bad health and heavy official duties; so that I must leave all details for another time, and content myself for the present with offering to the Society a description of a *Prinia*, which I feel confident is new to science, and which was obtained in the Bagesur valley on the 18th June, 1875, at an elevation of between 3000 and 4000 feet.

PRINIA POLIOCEPHALA, sp. n. (Plate XIX.)

Similis P. stewarti, et fronte cinerea pileo concolori, sicut in hac specie; sed dorso brunneo nec cinereo diversa; rostro nigro; pedibus pallide brunneis; iride pallide flavida; palpebris pallide stramineis.

Long. tot. 3·8, culminis 0·45, alæ 1·7, caudæ 1·8, tarsi 0·8.

Hab. Kumaon, India.

This species is of the same group as *P. cinereocapilla* and *P. stewarti*, but is distinguished from both by trenchant characters, which may be expressed in the following synoptic table:—

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|-----|---|-------------------------|
| a. | Back grey, as also the entire head..... | <i>stewarti</i> . |
| b. | Back rufescent brown, contrasting with the head, which is grey. | |
| a'. | Forehead grey, like the crown | <i>poliocephala</i> . |
| b'. | Forehead fulvous, crown of head grey.. ... | <i>cinereocapilla</i> . |

This discovery of an apparently new species of *Prinia* in a comparatively speaking well-explored country like Kumaon is an event of some interest.

I should not, however, omit to mention that I am indebted to my friend Mr. W. E. Brooks for having brought to my notice that the bird in question is apparently undescribed, and that it is not "*P. cinereocapilla*," by which name I had it catalogued in my note-book.

Unfortunately, I only obtained one specimen of the new bird, a male; but at the same place a fair series of *P. hodgsoni*, all males, was also added to my collection. Both species of Warblers were in beautiful plumage; an examination into their sexual organs indicated that the latter end of June and July must be their breeding-season; and hence probably the reason why no female examples were met with.

¹ In an article contributed by me to 'Stray Feathers' for 1875, vol. iii., entitled "Little or unknown Himalayan Oology," I have already given an account of the nidification and habits of some of the birds I met with on this occasion.



J Smit lith.

Hanhart imp

PRINIA POLIOCEPHALA